



Gregoire: Protecting and Restoring Puget Sound

Significant Actions in Governor Chris Gregoire's 2006 Budget

While the Partnership is digging deep into the issues, Washington State must speed up efforts on the ground now. The 2006 supplemental budget proposal includes \$42 million in new funding to the state's "2005-2007 Puget Sound Conservation and Recovery" plan to accelerate cleanup, restoration and protection. The money largely is from state and local toxics accounts. It will be used to expedite actions including:

Clean Up Polluted Sites in and near Puget Sound

Governor Gregoire's supplemental budget includes \$21.6 million to accelerate clean up of contaminated aquatic lands and nearby uplands. When toxic pollutants get into Puget Sound, they settle to the bottom. From there, they work their way into the food chain and ultimately can threaten the entire ecosystem. Large portions of Puget Sound have been degraded by decades of municipal and industrial activities.

The Department of Ecology has identified more than 5,700 acres of sediments in the Sound that exceed safe pollution standards. State-owned aquatic lands are among the contaminated sites that have seen only sporadic cleanup efforts. Ecology also has identified 115 contaminated upland sites within a half-mile of the Puget Sound shoreline that need cleaning up. All of these sources release toxic chemicals that can build up, get into the food chain and damage marine organisms, orcas, seals, fish and eventually humans.

Prevent Oil Spills and Toxic Contamination

Governor Gregoire will take significant steps in 2006 to better protect against oil spills. She is seeking legislation to require major oil-transport companies to train and conduct drills on spill prevention and cleanup. She also wants it made clear that the Department of Ecology has authority to conduct inspections of oil transfers. And she wants new authority to regulate tanker trucks that refuel boats from docks. The activity is unregulated and on the rise.

The Governor's supplemental budget includes \$1.9 million to prevent oil spills and hazardous material spills. The threat of a major oil spill in the Sound is real, and better regulation of companies that transport and transfer oil in our waters will reduce that risk. But it isn't only the major spills that threaten the Sound. The smaller spills add up and are a real concern because oil and other toxic substances kill marine life and linger in the food chain. Hazardous substance spills are increasing. Governor Gregoire's plan:

- **Implements an Oil Transfer Inspection Program.** Ecology will establish a state oil spill transfer inspection program in response to legislation passed in 2004 requiring additional measures to prevent spills during the transfer of oil between oil tankers, cargo vessels, shoreline facilities, tank trucks and oil barges. This program provides for the inspection of 35 percent of all transfers.
- **Reduces the risks of hazardous material spills.** Ecology will employ additional spill responders in Bellingham to respond quickly to spills in Snohomish, Skagit, Whatcom, Island and San Juan counties, which recently have experienced an increase of 300 spills a year. Ecology also will provide technical help to businesses to redesign systems to eliminate or substantially reduce the production and use of toxic substances.
- **Provides critical spill response resources.** Ecology's spills program will place booms, absorbent materials and other spill response equipment at 40 critical locations around Puget Sound. The

equipment is to be within hours of a spill in small communities or tribal areas. In 2005, expensive spill response equipment in Gig Harbor enabled local responders to contain thousands of gallons of oil and fuel from 50 boats destroyed in a marina fire, preventing release into Puget Sound and saving more than \$1 million in estimated clean-up costs.

On another front, Governor Gregoire's supplemental budget includes \$458,000 to help businesses reduce their use of toxic substances in manufacturing, which will reduce the likelihood of those toxins finding their way to the Sound.

Restore Nearshore, Estuarine and Salmon Habitats

Governor Gregoire's supplemental budget includes an additional \$3.25 million to restore estuaries and salmon habitat, working with agencies, tribes and other groups involved in these areas. These agencies and groups will complete priority estuary and salmon recovery projects that have the potential to be matched with federal funds through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. State funds will also be used to match federal funds, leveraging \$750,000 from the Army Corps to develop restoration actions for the future.

Make State Parks Models of Sound-friendly Development

Governor Gregoire's budget includes \$4 million to improve environmental performance at state parks and to build the foundation for setting an example at all Puget Sound parks about how to best care for Puget Sound. In the coming year, failing wastewater treatment systems will be replaced at Twanoh, Dosewallips, Ft. Casey, Ft. Ebey, Birch Bay and Sequim Bay state parks. At the same time, design work will begin to restore nearshore and freshwater habitat, implement low-impact development techniques to minimize stormwater runoff, and install advanced wastewater treatment systems.

Help Homeowners Save the Sound

Individuals and businesses in the Puget Sound region operate an estimated 472,000 septic systems. Many of them are aging and in disrepair, allowing human wastes to reach the Sound. This pollution has forced the closure of shellfish beds to protect consumers, which also creates economic hardship for shellfish growers. Septic systems can also contribute to nutrient pollution, which can deplete oxygen from the water and cause hypoxic or dead zones. Governor Gregoire's supplemental budget includes \$6.5 million to provide loans to homeowners to repair and replace failing septic systems. The Department of Ecology, working with the Puget Sound Action Team and the Department of Health, will expand a loan program and add a grant program to provide grants and low-interest loans to homeowners throughout the Sound to replace and repair failing septic systems. These loans will be administered through a private lending institution to be selected. Low-income applicants will be given preference.

Remove Derelict Creosote Logs

Logs coated with creosote can leach the chemical into water and sediment, killing marine life. Governor Gregoire's supplemental budget includes \$2 million to remove derelict creosote logs from Puget Sound shorelines. The Department of Natural Resources will contract with various entities and tribes to remove the logs. An estimated 3,300 tons of creosote logs will be removed annually with clean-ups targeted in Olympia, Port Orchard, Bremerton, eastern Jefferson County, Port Angeles, Bellingham, Anacortes, the Everett/Snohomish Estuary and Tacoma.

Innovative Stormwater Management Grants

Local governments are encouraged to embark on innovative projects to control stormwater. Governor Gregoire's supplemental budget includes \$2.5 million for grants to local governments for projects – such as natural drainage systems, green roofs, permeable pavement and rain gardens – to reduce stormwater impacts on Puget Sound.

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